

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

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S E C R E T STATE 036014 TOSEC 020066

EXDIS, FOR ATHERTON ONLY FROM SOBER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, LE, EG, SY, KU, SA

SUBJECT:FUTURE OF QUADRIpartite COMMISSION IN LEBANON

REF: KUWAIT 910

1. KUWAITI FONMIN AL JABER HAS NOW CONFIRMED REPORTS IN KUWAITI PRESS THAT QUADRIpartite COMMISSION (SYRIA, EGYPT, SAUDI ARABIA, AND KUWAIT), HAVING LARGELY COMPLETED ITS TASK OF WORKING OUT NECESSARY AGREEMENTS, "SHOULD COME TO AN END" (REFTEL). HE SAID, HOWEVER, IT WOULD NOT BE DISBANDED UNDER PRESENT UNCERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES.

2. IT WOULD BE UNFORTUNATE IF THE COMMISSION WERE TO DISBAND PREMATURELY. IT HAS HIGH SYMBOLIC IMPORTANCE, AS REPRESENTING THE COLLECTIVE WILL AND INFLUENCE OF THE MAJOR

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ARAB STATES. THE WITHDRAWAL OF ITS MEMBERS FROM AN ACTIVE ROLE COULD DEAL A BLOW TO SARKIS'S AUTHORITY, ENCOURAGE THE PALESTINIANS TO TRY AGAIN TO PLAY ON ARAB WORLD DIVISIONS AND LEAVE SYRIA STANDING VIRTUALLY ALONE IN ENFORCING DECISIONS WHICH COMMISSION HAD MADE COLLECTIVELY.

3. FOR THESE REASONS AND TO HEAD OFF, IF POSSIBLE, THE

NATURAL INCLINATION OF AT LEAST SOME OF THE COMMISSION MEMBERS TO DIVEST THEMSELVES OF RESPONSIBILITIES ASSUMED IN LEBANON, WE SUGGEST THAT YOU RECOMMEND TO THE SECRETARY THAT HE RAISE POSSIBLE DISSOLUTION OF COMMISSION WITH SARKIS. IF SARKIS SEES VALUE IN THE CONTINUED OPERATION OF THE COMMISSION, WHICH AT LEAST ONE BEIRUT PAPER HAS ANNOUNCED WOULD HOLD ITS LAST MEETING FEBRUARY 16, THE SECRETARY COULD THEN OFFER TO TAKE UP MATTER PERSONALLY WITH THE SYRIANS OR SAUDIS, AND THROUGH OUR AMBASSADOR WITH THE KUWAITIS AND EGYPTIANS. WE COULD EXPRESS OUR VIEW THAT THE COMMISSION HAS ALREADY PLAYED A CONSTRUCTIVE AND STABILIZING ROLE IN CONTRIBUTING TO THE PACIFICATION OF LEBANON AND OUGHT TO REMAIN ACTIVE THROUGHOUT THE PACIFICATION PERIOD. THIS POINT COULD BE MADE IN THE CONTEXT OF OUR CONTINUING APPROVAL OF THE STATESMANSHIP WHICH THE MODERATE ARAB STATES HAVE DEMONSTRATED IN COMING TO GRIPS WITH THE PROBLEM IN LEBANON AND HELPING TO CREATE CONDITIONS CONDUCIVE TO FURTHER PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE IN THE REGION AS A WHOLE.

5. KUWAIT'S DECISION TO ASSOCIATE ITSELF WITH RIYADH SUMMIT DECISIONS AND WITH QUADRIPARTITE COMMISSION WAS IMPORTANT STEP AWAY FROM ITS USUALLY UNQUESTIONING ATTITUDE TOWARDS PALESTINIANS. IF DECISION IS MADE NOT TO ENCOURAGE THE CONTINUED OPERATION OF THE COMMISSION, WE BELIEVE THAT FRANK MAESTRONE SHOULD BE INSTRUCTED, WHEN YOU MEET IN RIYADH, TO CONVEY TO FONMIN AL-JABER OUR APPRECIATION OF KUWAIT'S HELPFUL EFFORTS ON THE COMMISSION.

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